

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing a multi-device distributed digital video recording system, comprising:

    broadcasting a request from a requesting digital video recorder (DVR) to a plurality of networked DVRs seeking resources of a dormant DVR;

    receiving a response from at least one dormant DVR indicating availability of resources;

    selecting a granting DVR from the dormant DVRs with available resources;

    establishing a session between said requesting DVR and said granting DVR;

    providing resources of said granting DVR for use by said requesting DVR.

2. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein said resources include at least one of a tuner and a storage device.

3. A method in accordance with claim 1, wherein:

    said resources comprise a tuner of said granting DVR; and

    control of said tuner is turned over to said requesting DVR.

4. A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:

    requesting that said granting DVR tune to a particular channel and record designated content from said channel; and

    storing said designated content at said granting DVR for use by said requesting DVR.

5. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein said granting DVR does not have access to the particular channel, further comprising:

    advising the requesting DVR that said access is not available;

    requesting access to the particular channel by the requesting DVR on behalf of the granting DVR.

6. A method in accordance with claim 4, wherein:
  - a fee is charged to the requesting DVR for the designated content.
7. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
  - tagging the recorded designated content as being owned by said requesting DVR.
8. A method in accordance with claim 7, further comprising:
  - encrypting the recorded designated content with an encryption key known to said requesting DVR.
9. A method in accordance with claim 8, further comprising:
  - making said encrypted recorded designated content available to said granting DVR.
10. A method in accordance with claim 9, wherein said encrypted designated content is made available to said granting DVR for a fee.
11. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
  - requesting access to said stored designated content by said requesting DVR; and
  - uploading the stored designated content from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
12. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:
  - requesting access to said stored designated content by said requesting DVR; and
  - streaming the stored designated content from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
13. A method in accordance with claim 12, further comprising:
  - controlling presentation of said streamed designated content utilizing a command and control channel to send commands from said requesting DVR to said granting DVR.

14. A method in accordance with claim 13, wherein said commands comprise at least one of play, stop, pause, fast forward, rewind, skip, and jump.

15. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:

    automatically forwarding said stored designated content to a storage device at said requesting DVR.

16. A method in accordance with claim 4, further comprising:

    routing said request for resources through a system operator;  
    wherein multiple requests for identical designated content from multiple requesting DVRs are handled by a single granting DVR.

17. A multi-device distributed digital video recording system, comprising:

    a plurality of networked digital video recorders;  
    a requesting digital video recorder (DVR) capable of broadcasting a request to said plurality of networked DVRs seeking resources of a dormant DVR;  
    at least one dormant DVR capable of providing a response to said requesting DVR indicating availability of resources;  
    wherein:  
        said requesting DVR selects a granting DVR from the dormant DVRs with available resources;  
        a session is established between said requesting DVR and said granting DVR;  
    and  
        resources of said granting DVR are made available for use by said requesting DVR.

18. A system in accordance with claim 17, wherein said resources include at least one of a tuner and a storage device.

19. A system in accordance with claim 17, wherein:

said resources comprise a tuner of said granting DVR; and  
control of said tuner is turned over to said requesting DVR.

20. A system in accordance with claim 17, wherein:

said requesting DVR requests that said granting DVR tune to a particular channel and  
record designated content from said channel; and

said granting DVR stores said designated content for use by said requesting DVR.

21. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:

said granting DVR does not have access to the particular channel;

said granting DVR advising the requesting DVR that said access is not available;

said requesting DVR requests access to the particular channel on behalf of the granting  
DVR.

22. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:

a fee is charged to the requesting DVR for the designated content.

23. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:

said granting DVR tags the recorded designated content as being owned by said  
requesting DVR.

24. A system in accordance with claim 23, wherein:

said granting DVR encrypts the recorded designated content with an encryption key  
known to said requesting DVR.

25. A system in accordance with claim 24, wherein:

said encrypted recorded designated content is made available to said granting DVR.

26. A system in accordance with claim 25, wherein:  
said encrypted designated content is made available to said granting DVR for a fee.
27. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:  
said requesting DVR requests access to said stored designated content; and  
the stored designated content is uploaded from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
28. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:  
said requesting DVR requests access to said stored designated content; and  
the stored designated content is streamed from the granting DVR to said requesting DVR.
29. A system in accordance with claim 28, wherein:  
said requesting DVR controls presentation of said streamed designated content  
utilizing a command and control channel to send commands to said granting DVR.
30. A system in accordance with claim 29, wherein:  
said commands comprise at least one of play, stop, pause, fast forward, rewind, skip,  
and jump.
31. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:  
said granting DVR automatically forwards said stored designated content to a storage  
device at said requesting DVR.
32. A system in accordance with claim 20, wherein:  
said request for resources is routed through a system operator; and

multiple requests for identical designated content from multiple requesting DVRs are handled by a single granting DVR.

33. A digital video recorder (DVR) for use in a multi-device distributed digital video recording system, comprising:

- at least one tuner;

- at least one storage device;

- a processor enabled for at least one of:

- (a) broadcasting a request to a plurality of networked DVRs seeking resources of a dormant DVR;

- receiving a response from at least one dormant DVR indicating availability of resources;

- selecting a granting DVR from the dormant DVRs with available resources;

- establishing a session with said granting DVR; and

- utilizing resources of said granting DVR; and

- (b) receiving a broadcast request from a requesting DVR seeking available resources;

- responding to said requesting DVR regarding availability of resources;

- if resources are available and if selected by said requesting DVR, establishing a session with said requesting DVR; and

- providing resources for use by said requesting DVR.